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A

S E R M O N,

DELIVERED ON

WEDNESDAY THE 6th OF MAY, 1789.

A T T H E

MEETING-HOUSE IN THE OLD JEWRY, LONDON,

TO THE SUPPORTERS OF A

NEW ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION

A M O N G

PROTESTANT DISSENTERS,

By HUGH WORTHINGTON, JUN.

L O N D O N:

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M DCC LXXXIX.



A
S E R M O N, &c.

R O M A N S X V. 14.

And I myself also am persuaded of you, my Brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

I SHALL not take up your time with critical observations on the scope of this Epistle to the Romans, which, like most of St Paul's writings, is divided into two parts, doctrinal and practical; and which, notwithstanding some difficult passages, whose misconstruction has given rise to strange systems of Divinity, appears to me the most connected chain of reasoning in the whole compass of Scripture. But I shall proceed immediately to lay before
you

you my design in choosing these words, and the plan I propose in handling them.

When we would recommend any thing to our fellow creatures, it seems both natural and just to, urge those arguments and considerations in particular, which have had peculiar weight with ourselves. Now, when this noble Institution was projected, in behalf of which I this day appear an advocate before you, it struck my own mind with great force, that such a Seminary might have a signal and permanent effect upon the state of religious societies in this country, and especially of those among the Protestant Dissenters. This opinion I have seen no reason to alter : on the contrary, the conviction on which it was founded has increased. On this ground therefore, I wish to address the very respectable assembly now convened. And for this purpose, I have selected St. Paul's encomium on the church first planted at Rome, as presenting us with a very proper standard, with which to compare other christian societies, and by which to model their improvement.

But



But I cannot proceed to the discussion of this comprehensive subject, without making a particular and earnest request for your candour. At any time, and in any circumstances, your candour I greatly need; but at no time, and in no circumstances, so much as at present. When I think of my predecessors in this office, and call to mind their able and learned discourses, I shrink back into myself, and tho' greatly honor'd by your calling me to this service, am sufficiently mortified by the reflection, that my labours may prove only a foil, to set off the excellence of those compositions, which needed no aid from contrast.

I propose

First, to consider what is implied in the character here drawn of a christian society in early times ;

Secondly, to illustrate the great excellence and importance of such a character ;

Thirdly, to inquire, how far the present state of our religious societies corresponds,
or

or not, with this beautiful picture of a primitive one; and

Fourthly, to shew by what methods our religious societies may be rendered most like to that praised by the Apostle.

We are *first* to consider, what is implied in the character here drawn of a christian society in early times. They were "full of goodness filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." We have every reason to believe, that this picture bore a faithful resemblance to the original: and who is there, endow'd with moral discernment, that is not charmed with the portrait?

They were full of goodness. Some commentators think, that by *goodness* in this place the Apostle meant principally benevolence and candor; because he had been recommending these virtues in this and the preceding chapter. But the word itself * admits of a much larger interpretation, as

* *Ἀγαθωσύνη*.

might be proved from various authorities, and especially from the manner in which the LXX use it, in 2 Chron. xxiv, 16.— But waving a critical examination of the greek term, it is sufficient to my purpose to observe, that the general tenor of this epistle to the Romans will justify us in asserting, that they were a christian society exemplary for their faith, piety and righteousness, as well as for kindness or benevolence. Thus, it is said in the first chapter *, that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world; and in the sixteenth chapter †, that their obedience was come abroad unto all men: and in the verse before the text, the Apostle puts up a prayer for them, which plainly discovers the very high sense he had of their christian attainments. From the whole I infer, that this primitive church was entitled to the character of goodness, on its large and proper scale, as comprehending the several duties which we owe to God, to our fellow-creatures, and to ourselves.---And to their eternal credit, it is

* Verse 8

† Verse 19

recorded of them by the sacred pen-man, that they were FULL of goodness. This cannot mean, that they were absolutely perfect (the present state of human nature not admitting of this) but they were desirous of perfection, and uniformly and steadily pressing after it. They did not think, by the performance of one duty, to compound for the neglect of another. They did not separate morality from devotion, or charity from zeal. They endeavoured to “fulfil all righteousness”, neither slighting positive institutions, nor confiding in them. If I may use the phrase, they were not one thing abroad, and another at home; they were not serious in the temple, and gay in the world—religious in affliction, and vain in prosperity. But they aimed at goodness, in all its kinds, on all occasions, before all persons, and in spite of all allurements and difficulties.

Again, it is said of this early society at Rome, that they were *filled with all knowledge*. This must be understood with great limitations; for in the literal and strict sense, no man is possessed of all knowledge; so wide is the field of speculation, and

and so various are the parts into which it is distributed. By devoting a whole life to the pursuit of learning, in some sciences we may become adepts, but in others we shall still be smatterers. There is not only much knowledge reserved to a future state, as better suited to that state than this, but even with that portion of knowledge, which we can acquire at present, a great deal of error, uncertainty and confusion is mingled. The Apostle, therefore, must refer to spiritual knowledge, and of this only to such branches, as are most connected with our improvement, and most essential to our happiness. Religious knowledge infinitely outweighs every other, in its nature, objects, efficacy, and duration. And it is in the Christian's power to make great advances in this knowledge, adding one degree to another, according to the injunctions of holy writ.

Now St. Paul was able to congratulate his friends at Rome, that they abounded in this sacred acquisition : that they had duly applied themselves to the investigation of religious subjects ; that they had

B patiently

patiently and successfully inquired into their truth, sense and importance; that they had carefully studied the nature and obligations of duty, the perfections and government of God, the early and later revelations of his will, and particularly the great and glorious scheme of redemption through his Son. In a word, by this encomium, the Apostle declares, that they were enlightened and judicious christians.

Finally, he observes of them, that they were *able also to admonish one another*. Some copies read the passage "able also to admonish OTHERS." * but if you retain the common reading, you must discern a very important sentiment couched under it. It cannot fail to teach us, that even a religious society, thus fruitful in good works, reciprocally stood in need of admonishing and being admonished. It reminds us of a humiliating truth, that the wisest judgment may err, the strongest resolution waver, and the best character be incomplete. Hence it is said of good people,

* Αλλας for αλληλως.

that

that "fearing the Lord, they speak often
 "one to another"; and by seasonable and
 well directed hints "provoke one another
 unto love and to good works." *

You will please to observe, that for
 want of time, I shall take no notice of this
 clause, under any subsequent head of dis-
 course.

Secondly, We are next to consider the
 great excellence and importance of such
 a character — a character composed of
 knowledge and goodness.

Here it is not my intention to pro-
 nounce a panegyric on knowledge and
 goodness, considered either in themselves,
 or in their effects: for that would open
 a boundless field of discussion: but mere-
 ly to advert to the circumstance of their
 being UNITED in one and the same cha-
 racter. Permit me to say, that the vast im-
 portance of such a union is not suffici-
 ently considered by the christian world.

* Mal. iii, 16. Heb. x, 24.

Many are for seperating these things, some pleading for one, some for the other, just as if their interests were opposite. Whereas, not only each is a duty, as far as circumstances will admit, but actually the lustre and force of each very greatly depend on its being combined with the other. In support of this proposition, I appeal to the nature of things, and to the decision of the scriptures.

The blessed Author of our being has formed us with the most evident reference to the junction of knowledge and goodness. He has planted in every man moral feelings and rational faculties; and therefore, no one can be compleatly happy, or compleatly useful, who has not made provision for the right exercise of both.

Knowledge without goodness is a mean without an end; it is a qualification for being serviceable to mankind, without a heart to use it. Knowledge alone puffeth up*, and has filled many a one with va-

* Cor. viii. 1.

vanity and self-conceit, leading him to despise other people and keep them at a distance. It must be joined with charity, in order to edify ; it must be cloathed with humility, in order to attract. Mere knowledge may make a disputant, but it will never make a real christian. A man may be the subject of admiration on account of his knowledge, but without goodness he will never excite love, command respect, or call forth confidence. He may excel in a controversy, and bear away the palm of victory amidst a circle of polemics, but he is not fit to be a parent, a guardian, or a friend. Justly have we a mean opinion of them, who spend their time in nothing else than reading romances ; but very little better ought we to think of those, who, having acquired the best knowledge, never make use of it to regulate their conduct. Where is the difference, in point of comfort, between a hungry poor man, and a rich miser starving amidst his hoard ? None. Neither is there any, between an ignorant person, and another, who tho' full of knowledge never applies it. St. Paul's
 declaration

declaration on this subject does equal honor to his head and heart—“Tho’ I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and tho’ I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity (love to God and man) I am NOTHING”*. — It may further be observed, that knowledge, undirected by religion, is frequently worse than a useless ornament; it has been converted into an instrument of great evil to society.—In every case, extraordinary light and information, unproductive of virtue and piety, will serve only to aggravate our guilt, and enhance our punishment. Of this, the Divine Being has given us the plainest warning by his Son; “If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them.—He that knew his master’s will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.” §

We might next reverse these observations, and shew the narrowness and defi-

* 1 Cor. xiii, 2. § John xiii, 17.—Luke xii, 47.

ciency of goodness without knowledge. But as the value of knowledge was, with singular ability, set before you in the last annual discourse, it would be not only unnecessary, but improper, to enlarge on this part of the subject. I shall therefore dismiss it in few words.

Where ignorance is involuntary, or the result of unavoidable circumstances, God will not lay it to any one's charge. But in every other instance, it is highly culpable: and in all cases, the effects of it are to be deplored. Without knowledge, religion is lamentably defective in many essential branches. For example—if a man be ignorant of the grounds of his faith, his faith is irrational and unsatisfactory, however true the objects which it embraces; he will not be able to vindicate it; and what he cannot vindicate, he may be induced to abandon.—He professes to value the sacred Scriptures, but for want of an enlightened understanding, he sees but little of their beauty, and often misconstrues their meaning: he misapplies many a passage, to the dispa-
ragement

agement of the Divine Being, to his own sad infelicity, and to the disquietude of his friends.—He worships God, and maintains communion with him, but both his meditations and prayers are narrowed and obscured by ignorance. He cannot behold the Father of mercies in that admiring or complacential light, which would be the effect of seeing more of his works, and understanding more of his ways.—If you take away knowledge, what remains for the guidance and direction of goodness? goodness is not instinct: it is not animal sensation: it is not a blind or mechanic impulse: therefore, if you strip it of knowledge, it must lose even a part of its very nature. Hence, our Lord proverbially observes, in reference to an ignorant disciple, “he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth” §.—The amiableness, credit, and utility of goodness, must ever depend on its being connected with knowledge. The want of information shall frustrate a man’s best intentions,

§ John xii. 35.

and

and utterly prevent him from giving instruction to others : it *may* draw down upon him the ridicule of the world, and *must* nearly reduce him to the insignificance of a cypher.—Once more, we know that “ it is good to be always zealously affected in a good thing : ” but if a christian be destitute of religious knowledge, how shall he discern this good thing ? How shall he ascertain the object on which his zeal should be employed, or mark the degree to which it should rise ?

Thus it appears from the nature of things, that goodness and knowledge should never (if possible) be separated ; because when separated, each of them becomes lame, mean and deficient. As on the contrary, when knit together in firm union, they present us with a spectacle most delightful, most honorable, most beneficial.

My next appeal was to the Scriptures. But having already made various references to them, I shall not detain you in this place with many quotations. Let me just recite a few passages, every one of which includes *both* the objects of this discourse, and therefore must clearly prove, that the Christian

C

Religion

Religion requires of its Disciples a conjunction of knowledge and goodness. In a variety of places, where the Apostle presents ardent supplication to God in behalf of his christian friends, it is with a special and strong reference to this conjunction. Let me give two instances: "This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent, (*or try things which differ*;) that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God." Again, "for this cause, we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." * You remember it is said, with a beautiful contrast, "in malice be children, but in understanding be men—

* Philip. i. 9—11. Coloss. i. 9, 10.

be ye wise as serpents, but harmless as doves." † In like manner, we are commanded to "add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge; to grow in grace, *i. e.* in holiness, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Once more, it is enjoined upon us, "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, [this is the foundation of goodness] and be ready always to give, to every man that asketh, a reason of the hope which is in you" [this supposes knowledge *.]

Now, my friends, putting these things together, you learn the great value and importance of the character under consideration. Such a character, realised but in one INDIVIDUAL is a nobler object than anything we can contemplate beneath the skies. Figure to yourselves a person, who, enlightened by knowledge, speaks and acts with judgment, who communicates useful information, opens the Scriptures to the young and ignorant, removes the fears and prejudices of the superstitious, admonishes them that are in error, resolves the doubts

† 1 Cor. xiv, 20. Matt. x, 16.

* 2 Peter i, v, iii, 18. 1 Peter iii, 15.

of the perplexed, confirms the principles of the wavering, and becomes a kind of oracle to all around him. But also figure him to yourselves, as a man of probity and goodness, of humility and piety, of patience and fortitude; as a man deserving to be called a second Cornelius, whose prayers and whose alms jointly come up before God for a memorial: conceive of him, as prudent but not timid, lowly but not mean, bold but never forward, steady but never rigid; as chearful without levity, affectionate without weakness, and generous without ostentation. If there be any thing in the natural world, worthy to be compared to this man, it is the sun in the firmament, which illuminates, warms and fertilises, all at once.

Suppose then a SOCIETY formed of such: Suppose a church, where all, or at least, most of its members answer to this description. Is it in the power of words to say, how venerable, how glorious, such an assembly must be? Oh! what a comfort to those who labour among them? With what satisfaction must their ministers apply to them the words of the Apostle, “What is our
hope,

hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming?"—But I pass to a much more important reflection—what a credit to religion, and to the founder of our religion, is such a Society? The former is denominated light, and a doctrine according to godliness; the latter came into our world to open the eyes of the blind, and to turn every man from his sins: these inestimable objects will obtain credibility, when our churches are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge. Then in vain shall Deists prevaricate and cavil, in vain sneer and misrepresent. Then a thousand Voltaires could not hurt us.—What a blessing would such churches be to a nation and kingdom? what a security to good government, and to political prosperity? What an ornament and a treasure to the world? What an image of Heaven?—May I finish the climax? May I add without blasphemy, *what a resemblance of God?*—Yes, I can and do add it. For the eternal union of knowledge and goodness comprehends every thing we can conceive of as amiable, in the nature and attributes of DEITY.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, I proceed to enquire, how far the present state of our religious societies corresponds, or not, with this beautiful picture of a primitive one.

In prosecuting this branch of my subject, I do not wish to indulge violent satyr, or unrestrained condemnation of present times. It was indeed the sentiment of Horace, that among the Romans every age became worse than the preceding*. But a much greater authority has taught us the necessity of caution in passing judgment on such a topick,—say not “what is the cause that the former days were better than these; for thou enquirest not wisely concerning this.”† Many writers have taken upon them to condemn the present age without reserve, because they can trace among us some vices, which had little or no appearance in the last century, or possibly at a much later period, when they themselves were children. But these persons forget, that virtues and vices, like sea and land, often change places with each other, though

* *Ætas parentum, pejor avis, tulit
Nos nequiores, mox daturos
Progeniem vitiosorem.*

Lib. III. Od. VI. 46.

† *Eccles. vii. 10.*

they cannot exchange natures. In one place, the sea trenches on the land, and swallows up a large tract of it: but then in another, it retreats just as much, and leaves a valuable portion of solid ground. So, in one century, vices spring up, which in a preceding were scarcely observable; and on the contrary, those which formerly prevailed, and were enormous, now almost disappear. Thus, the Israelites, while in the wilderness, were principally addicted to murmuring against Providence—when settled in Canaan, their leading vice was idolatry—and when by the Babylonish captivity they were cured of idolatry, they substituted another vice, equally abhorrent to God, hypocrisy. And if we compare the present state of this country, with what historians record of its manners under the reign of Charles II. shall we not discern, that in his time, this nation had more drunkenness, obscenity and profaneness, than now? But on the contrary, is there not in the present day, a spirit of refinement, dissimulation and luxury gone forth, which enervates both the moral and political body? The former assailed the temple of Virtue by open storm,

form, the latter secretly undermines the foundation.—From these things it surely appears, that an exact estimate of the virtue and vice of any country is a calculation which requires many data. Whoever praises or condemns the age he lives in, in an unqualified manner, or as we usually say, in the gross, entirely misses the truth, and exposes his own weakness.

These preliminaries I lay down, to guard both myself, and my subject, from being misapprehended. I do not think, that this nation is, in point of morality, worse in the present age than formerly. I would hope, it is improved. Most readily do I accede to the noble and animated eulogium, pronounced in this pulpit two years ago, on the melioration of mankind in general. Sciences have been cultivated, laws amended, various arts discovered, war is conducted with less cruelty, the spirit and power of the inquisition are declining, and liberty both civil and religious is infinitely better understood. Indeed, that the face of the world should, from time to time, be really improving, might naturally be expected, if the doctrine of a wise and good Providence be true,

true. The benevolence of the Supreme Moral Governour makes this highly probable. But, you will please to bear it in mind, this argument is of a general, not a specific nature. The world, taken collectively, may be always improving, and yet some particular countries shall for a certain time decline, rather than advance. Therefore, no conclusion can be drawn from hence, respecting the true state of religion among us, at this period.

I have already said, that I believe, the virtue or morality of this kingdom is not less now, than formerly. But I dare not say, that our *seriousness* is greater, or even equal to what it has been ; except you include the instances, wherein it is wretchedly disfigured by the nonsense of enthusiasm. And this brings me to the exact point, at which I am aiming.

Multitudes are in a state of apathy, both as to knowledge and goodness. Of these we shall take but a momentary notice. They profess religion, but understand nothing about it. Occasionally they go to church, but scarcely listen, and do not
D improve.

improve. Some are decent, because not tempted by their connections to be profane : some are just, because otherwise the law would trouble them ; others are perfectly good-tempered, because they happened to be born such. These persons are Dissenters, or members of the Establishment, just as their fathers were before them : they follow their track, plod through the world, and have little notion, and no concern about a future state.

Now, from this apathy many are awaked ; but it is to enthusiasm, absurdity, blind zeal, and superstitious worship. They hold *doctrines*, which are irrational and contemptible, and which make religion the object either of disgust, or of terror : doctrines, which, if true, would rob the Deity of his glory, for they infringe upon justice, and annihilate mercy ; doctrines, which by representing God as partial, serve only, to make one man proud, and another despairing ; in a word, doctrines, which necessarily transfer all our obligations of gratitude, love, and confidence, from the Father of Spirits, to some other Being.—Their *want of charity* is,

is, if possible, still worse than their creed. Blessed be God, we live in times, when they cannot proceed to the cruelties of a Bonner, or a Jeffries; they cannot erect the scaffold, or light the faggots. But, though they may not burn the bodies, they consign over to damnation the souls of all who differ from them in speculative opinions. Yes; were the keys of the kingdom of heaven lodged in their hands, not a single christian would be suffered to enter that state, who could not pronounce "shibboleth" as they do*.—And what are the *Preachers* they follow? Men of such total ignorance, that they rail at learning, and call reason carnal, though God gave the one, and appointed the other. Men, who build a system of Divinity, upon a figure, an allusion, a detached word or two; who quote the Scripture by sound, instead of sense; and who strain the types of the Old Testament, 'till every judicious Christian blushes, and every infidel triumphs. In short, men, who with violent rant, distorted countenance, and ridiculous ges-

* Judges xii. 6.

ture, convert the pulpit into a stage of buffoonry.—In all this, I have not knowingly exaggerated*.

But it is time, to consider another class of Christians, who have also emerged from the general lethargy—but they have taken a course quite opposite to the former; they have sought after knowledge, but neglected piety. That they have applied to knowledge, is indeed to their credit. By much reading and thinking, their minds are enlarged: by studying the fundamental principles of religion, they are considerably skilled in separating truth from error; they have made the meaning of Scripture, as well as its inspiration, the subject of their enquiries; in consequence, they converse well on speculative points, and are not led away by every wind of doctrine, and the craftiness of them who lie in wait to deceive. But with all this mental furniture, we find in some cases great irregularity, and

* In Dr. Stennett's Discourses on the parable of the Sower (N^o I and III.) the reader may see a portrait of enthusiastic Preachers and Hearers, drawn with great judgment, and vivid colours,

even vice ; and in ten thousand instances, where we must not use so harsh a term, there is much levity and lukewarmness—little of the practice of religion, and still less of its spirit. If these persons do not answer to some parts of the prophet's description *, if “ they do not cause the “ seat of violence to come near, if they do “ not drink wine in bowls, &c.” yet there is a striking resemblance in another feature, “ they dwell at ease in Zion, and “ are not grieved for the affliction of “ Joseph.” They feel no concern about the state of religion in the world, and will do nothing to assist and advance it. By frequently mingling with the vain and trifling, they have lost that appearance of seriousness which they once had. The delicate edge of religious sensibility is worn off. Indifference has taken full possession of them. Though they are descended from parents, who stately maintained family worship, yet these live in the total neglect of that very becoming, useful and important service. Into their closets I cannot look. But this is noto-

* Amos vi. 1—6,

rious and undeniable, that though their fathers were the ornament of our christian societies, these either seldom come to the temple, or allow themselves in the habitual practice of attending but once in the Sabbath, while they expect their ministers always to serve twice at the altar. Indeed, some of these persons plead in their own excuse, that they have no occasion to come frequently to public worship, because they could *learn* nothing if they were present, since they understand religious subjects, as well as those who are appointed to discuss them. Now, granting this were a fact, I wish such refined christians would ask themselves one plain question, "what could have been our Saviour's motive for his steady attendance at the Jewish synagogue, every Sabbath-day?" Did HE want information, or is information the only object of public worship?—I know, that many of this class value themselves on their liberality of sentiment; and truly, liberality is an excellent thing; but they will permit me to remind them of two observations, which belong to this subject, and which they seem to have forgot;

forgot: one is, a great deal of modern liberality is the effect, not of principle, but of the politeness of the age; the other is, that liberality, however beautiful in itself, is not to be a substitute for other virtues. GOODNESS (the term used by the Apostle in our text) is a very comprehensive character, including a great variety of moral and religious habits: of these, we are not to set up one against the rest, but must endeavour to pay a similar attention to them all. In general, they decline or flourish together *."

* *Virtutes mutuo gaudent comitatu: quod si una desit, facile pereunt cæteræ.*

Grotius, in Apocal. III. 2.

It is possible, that various remarks, in the course of this Sermon, will be thought by some persons, too precise and severe: perhaps, they may be called puritanical. But I am not to be deterred, by the fear of names, from saying what appears to me, materially connected with the cause of vital religion. No man can justly call my sentiments uncandid, when I solemnly avow my belief, that good people, of every sect, and of every opinion, will be accepted at last. But candor ought not to abate seriousness. The standard of a christian's duty is placed very high in the New Testament: and God forbid, that I should be one of those temporizers, who would lower the standard, in order to accommodate the indolent, or to please the lukewarm!

Thus

Thus we have attempted to mark some discriminating circumstances in the present state of our religious societies. Our interest as Dissenters has greatly suffered by both extremes—by the fire of bigotted ignorance, and the cold of inactive knowledge. Nor could the Church of England triumph over us in these particulars, were she disposed to do it; for by the influence of the same causes, she sustains a similar loss. When you deduct, from the great bulk of professors, first, those who are alike inattentive to knowledge and religion, secondly, those who are zealous for particular notions, without either information in the head, or charity in the heart, and thirdly, such as possessing great knowledge are not in their temper serious, or in their lives exemplary—You will, I doubt not, be sensible, that our christian assemblies admit of great improvement in the united excellencies specified in the text. After such a review of things, it cannot be unnatural to exclaim, “by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?” Yet I would not insinuate by these remarks, that we are to give ourselves

selves up to despondency. Many wise and worthy characters are still among us : many, who are anxious for the diffusion of knowledge, and the revival of piety in the world. Of this, they daily give us unequivocal proofs ; and surely, not the least is at this instant before us—a Collegiate Institution for the education of youth, thus recently founded, and thus zealously supported.

It remains to shew, *Fourthly*, by what means our religious societies may be rendered most like to that praised by the Apostle.

Both reason and revelation teach us, that the success of all our endeavours to improve mankind must depend on the blessing and co-operation of God. To him, therefore, let us direct that suitable petition, *Revive thy work in the midst of the years* *. Strange must be the conduct of Christians, if they can overlook this duty, when a Roman General never undertook any thing of

* Habak. iii. 2.

portance, till he had gone up to the temple of Jupiter, and when a heathen philosopher could say, no man is good without a divine influence.

But though we are commanded to seek the blessing of God by prayer, we are not to rest in our prayers. Supplication is mockery, when not followed with personal exertion. Every man, according to his ability and station, should strenuously exert himself for the promotion of knowledge and goodness in the world, and especially in his own neighbourhood, and in that religious society with which he is connected.—Some, however, are *peculiarly* called upon to assist in this work, of which the most distinguished are, Ministers, Parents, and the Conductors of Public Seminaries. This enumeration will be thought by many very deficient, because I have not included in it Magistrates. But the just power of the magistrate is negative, rather than positive; it is political, not religious: he may restrain evil, and punish offenders, but he is not ordained by God to interpret revelation. Should he proceed to
 establish

establish Christianity, he can only establish the *profession* of it: and if he think to fence the truth by articles and penalties, instead of promoting knowledge, he injures it; for he shuts out enquiry—and enquiry is the lamp of knowledge.

Let me therefore return to the three-fold division already suggested.

1. In reviving or extending the cause of knowledge and goodness, much depends upon the MINISTERS of the Gospel. They may be said to have the key of knowledge, and they were expressly appointed for perfecting the saints, and for edifying the body of Christ.——Now, the few observations I shall deliver, respecting their duty, would come from me with great impropriety and indecorum, were I considered, as addressing them to my fathers in the ministry. But nothing of that kind is presumed. They are solely intended for such as are setting out in the work, or are prosecuting their studies with a view to it; and in this respect, may not be unsuitable to the occasion of our present meeting.

If

If ministers would really promote the united interests of knowledge and goodness, in their respective societies, their discourses ought to be instructive, plain, scriptural, energetic, and adapted to the young.

They ought to be *instructive*: Not idle and empty harangues, which give no information. They must not be one dull track of thoughts and phrases. Some ministers, whatever be their text, run through the same wearisome round of sentiments. These always remind me of an empiric, who has but one medicine, and administers this to all his patients, however different their complaints, ages, or constitutions. Whereas, not only are the subjects of Revelation very numerous, each of them claiming attention, but the characters, the tastes, and conditions of mankind are infinitely diversified; and different people are affected by different arguments.

Our discourses must in the next place be *plain*: not deep with metaphysics, not dry with philosophy. With regard
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to children, servants, and poor persons in general, they must be plain, in order to be instructive: and multitudes, higher in rank, and superior in knowledge, equally stand in need of plain addresses, though from a very different cause:—such are the only addresses, that reach the heart, or rouse the conscience.

Farther ; if we desire our churches to approach the standard mentioned in the text, our public discourses must be *scriptural*. Far be it from me, to recommend the use of scripture language, as a cloak to hide our real sentiments from our congregations. Such a practice is mean and cowardly. But still, every wise and good minister will make the scripture the basis of his prayers and sermons. What was it, my brethren, that confronted the philosophers of the pagan world, that put an end to idolatry, that subdued principalities and powers, that renewed and exalted mankind? It was the simplicity of the New Testament. Why then should we be shy of the language of the scriptures? Shall we increase our usefulness by being so? Are we wiser
than

than God? Or, have we embraced sentiments, which cannot be supported by the word of God—You will say perhaps, that many things in scripture are figurative and difficult. Be it so. Then let us follow the glorious pattern of a Clark and a Jortin, who made difficult things plain, not by shunning the scriptures, but by aptly comparing, and judiciously expounding them.

Suffer me to add, our services should be *energetic*. Zeal is too good a thing, to be wholly consigned over to fanatics. Human nature is two-fold, consisting of reason and passions; and if we do not secure the latter, small will be our interest with the former. He that thinks it beneath him to address the affections of mankind, does virtually impeach God, who thought fit to bestow them. I allow, there is a great difference in the natural constitution of preachers: still however, I am of opinion, that most of them, had they been trained to the bar, would have shewn considerable powers of exertion: and surely, if any thing can merit exertion, the cause of knowledge and goodness may claim it.

Finally,

Finally, in all our labors we should have a peculiar respect to *young people*. They are not pre-occupied by prejudice, or hackneyed in vice: a busy world has not yet engrossed their attention; a corrupt world has not yet poisoned their principles: they generally give us the listening ear, and seldom leave us without an affectionate heart. With them we cannot begin too soon; and therefore it may justly be affirmed, that catechising is one of the most valuable and useful branches of the pastoral office. Indeed, it gives me heartfelt concern, that the situation of a minister in London, almost necessarily, excludes the discharge of this pleasant and important duty; we have few or no children to catechise, because they are sent to schools in the country, for the sake of blending health with instruction*.

* I am happy to observe the duty of catechising recommended and urged, by one of the greatest writers this country can boast, the Bishop of LANDAFF, in his late charge to the clergy of his diocese, p. 15.—But I must take this opportunity of remarking, that public catechising *before a congregation* appears to me to answer very little purpose. The children are intimidated; the pleasure, the freedom, the profit, are nearly lost. They may wish to have many things explained, but dare not propose their doubts in the presence of a large assembly.

2. The

2. The promotion of knowledge and goodness, in every christian society, must depend very greatly upon PARENTS.

Ye, who sustain that important and favoured character, may not in general be supposed to possess the learning of ministers; but ye are furnished with some advantages, which give you a great superiority over them in the business of instruction. We are, comparatively, strangers to those we address in public: you frequently, if not daily, see your offspring. You know their turn and genius—their passions and propensities—their excellencies and failings. Ye can adapt yourselves to them, and may use a freedom and authority, to which we are not entitled, and may speak with an affection, which no man can share with a parent.

If then you wish well to your children, if you desire the prosperity of Zion, and would help to build up her walls, be instant in season and out of season: watch the opening of their understandings: let in the rays of knowledge, as they can admit

admit them ; train them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; teach them the best things, in the best manner. Lead them to distinguish, between what is essential, and what is non-essential, especially between the doctrines of God and the inventions of men ; guard them against human phrases and doxologies, and bring them early in life to a scriptural faith, a scriptural worship, and a scriptural conduct. Shew them, why you are christians and protestants, and, if dissenters, on what grounds ye are such : help them to judge for themselves : labor to render them firm in religious principles, yet always candid to those who entertain different sentiments ; check the first appearance of bigotry ; repeat to them the names of venerable and pious men, who have belonged to very different communions ; this will expand their hearts : for God's sake, let them never attach salvation to a particular creed, or to a particular sect. Give them amiable and honourable views of the blessed God, and enlarged ideas concerning his providence. Accustom them to daily devotion ; set them a pattern in your own
F families ;

families ; incline them to reverence public worship, but guard them from a superstitious abuse of it. Let all things be done decently and in order. When convenient exhort, when necessary admonish, when proper restrain. Let your government appear mild, but be sure it is steady. Remember the sin of Eli, who doubtless had well instructed his children, but, for want of authority and discipline, might just as well have abandoned them to ignorance—"they made themselves vile, " and he restrained them not *." The rebellion and ruin of Adonijah took their rise from the same cause—"David his " father had not displeased him at any " time, in saying, why hast thou done so?" †

Surely, if these plain hints were but uniformly and vigorously applied, the general aspect of things would be greatly mended, decaying churches would revive, and prosperous ones be continued and established. But some parents habituate themselves to lament the degeneracy of the times, and are often heard to say,

* 1 Sam. iii. 13.

† 1 Kings i. 6.

" what

“ what will become of religion, when we
 “ are dead !” while they take no effectual
 means to transmit knowledge, liberality
 and piety to the succeeding age.—Others
 are indeed careful to inform the minds of
 the young, either personally, or by tutors,
 but they do not look well to their own
 example : they are gay, frivolous, disso-
 lute. Thus all their instruction is de-
 feated. The good lesson is forgot, but
 the noxious pattern is remembered.
 Alas ! the eye is more acute at learning,
 than the ear.—It deserves notice, that
 the heathens laid great stress on parental
 and domestic example : of which I will
 give you one instance. Cicero, in his
 celebrated accusation of Verres, makes
 this a specific and solemn charge, that he
 had injured his son, by setting before
 him a bad example, and in doing this
had injured the Roman Republic. *

I close this head, with remarking a
 circumstance, which more than any
 other, in the compass of my observation,
 has proved hurtful to our religious soci-
 eties. Many parents choose their country

* Cic. in Verr. L. iii. § 159.

villas, where children can have few or no opportunities for attending public worship ; at least, where they cannot do it, in the way, which those parents have acknowledged upon conviction to be most scriptural. Such persons act very inconsistently. In a little time, the landscape, for the sake of which they have fixed their residence, will vanish from the eye — but the injury done to their families, and to the christian church will remain.

3. ACADEMICAL INSTITUTIONS, for the education of youth, are peculiarly adapted to the revival of those invaluable excellencies, which have been specified, and to the spreading of them through all our christian societies.

If the time would have allowed, this proposition might have been considered, first, in a general form, and then with a particular reference to that new Academical Institution among Protestant Dissenters, on account of which we are this day assembled : but having already trespassed on your time, greatly beyond
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my wishes, I must beg leave to omit almost every thing of a general nature, and shall come directly to the specific design of the Institution before us.

So far as the *education of ministers* is an object in this Institution, I need not use many words ; because that object is not peculiar to this Institution, but has long been attended to in several others ; and likewise, because the thing is so plain, and speaks so loudly for itself, that it cannot want either proving or recommending. You have heard that much, very much, depends on the ministers of the gospel ; but in a few years the present race of ministers will be removed from their public labours ; therefore it must be the duty of the christian community to provide for the generations which shall follow. Every institution, calculated to afford COMPLETE instruction to youth designed for the ministry, must be of essential importance to the advancement of religious knowledge, and to the extension of religious candour. If young ministers are but half educated, how can they be
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the means of diffusing these blessings in the church and world? Can a man give what he has not? If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. Christ has laid down the qualification of his ministers;—they are to be scribes “well instructed”;—not superficially taught; they are to be “workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” We live in an age, in which Scepticism endeavours to call in the assistance of learning, and certainly is decorated with the ornaments of eloquence: therefore ministers, possessed of a scanty furniture, will only degrade and injure the cause of Christianity, while they attempt to explain or defend it. Besides, no ministers are so conceited, or so uncharitable, as those who have but little reading. The fact precisely stands thus; if they had no reading, they would be less vain of themselves; if they had more reading, they would be less censorious upon others.

The Institution now before me, succeeds to that at Hoxton. The Dissenters
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in London ought never to be without a College* in its neighbourhood, both on account of the frequent want of occasional supplies in the pulpit, and also the numerous advantages for knowledge improvement, and connexions, which divinity-students may derive from such a situation. In each of these views, I frankly own, I should be much concerned to see either the dissolution or removal of the College at Homerton, which belongs to our Congregational Brethren, however I may differ from them in some controverted points. Most sincerely do wish that both Institutions may prove, to distant ages, sources of learning, piety, and charity. May they be as rivers, "the streams whereof shall make glad the city of our God!"

We come now to the other great object of this Institution, *the education of the laity*. This, in a degree, has been blended

* The term *College* is used, not for the sake of imitating the Establishment, but because the word *Academy* (applied of late years to every common school) does not convey a proper idea of our plan of education.

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with other institutions; but except in the case of Warrington, which is dissolved, has never been, till now, the prominent feature, and main design of collegiate education among Dissenters.* Here then let us spend a few minutes, that we may view the object in its proper magnitude and importance. I mean to shew you, that this part of our plan is peculiarly connected with the great interests of knowledge and goodness in our several societies, and will have a singular tendency to promote them. This, I flatter myself, will be sufficiently demonstrated, if I can prove two things :—FIRST, that the Institution is designed for those persons among the laity, on whom the advancement of such interests must principally depend;—and SECONDLY, that it holds out to such persons extraordinary helps and advantages for the purpose of effecting it.

* The Institution at Manchester commenced a little after the foundation of this was laid. May its prosperity ever correspond to the zeal and ability of its present conductors ! A better wish I need not express in its behalf.

I say

I say, that *the Institution is designed for* THOSE PERSONS *among the LAITY on whom the advancement of knowledge and goodness, in our respective societies, must principally* DEPEND. These are young people, who by their patrimony, or their prospects, are raised far above the lower walks of life. That such are the Lay Students, for whom this Seminary is intended, must be obvious to every one at the first glance : for though the terms of board and tuition are remarkably moderate, compared with the advantages gained, yet undoubtedly they are high above the reach of poor mechanics. The children of necessitous persons are sent to charity-schools ; and those who are not in absolute want, but who at the same time owe their bread to hard labour, and strict œconomy, look out for a very limited degree of education ; they seek the cheapest supply of knowledge, which either the city or country can afford. By these remarks, however, let me not be thought to slight the lower orders of the community. To them we owe our houses, our raiment, our ten thousand comforts ; and many of them are as pious

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in principle, and as virtuous in conduct, as they are politically useful to the state. Therefore, I mean not the least reflection upon them : nay, you will soon see, I am eventually pleading their cause ; for in the issue of things, the poor themselves will be benefited, by a form of education to which they have no immediate access. But all that I here design, is to lay down the fact respecting the objects for whom this College is intended, and then to ground upon that fact the following observations.

As ministers can do very little good, without the concurrence of the laity, so in particular do they need the assistance of such laity, as are raised above the ordinary level. These are the persons, who must give countenance to every pious and liberal plan, for diffeminating knowledge, and promoting religion, or it will prove feeble and abortive. In proportion as men are exalted by wealth, office, or connection, they must do more good, or more evil, than others. Have they not many servants, domestics, and dependants ? Is
not

not the sphere of their influence very extensive? Do they not set the fashion in every country? Most indisputably, to them inferiors look up; from them they take the model of their own conduct, and at all times think they have a sufficient apology for themselves, in pleading the conduct of their superiors. Thus among the Jews, the Pharisees said, by way of excuse for their infidelity, “have any of the rulers believed on Jesus?”*— Besides, the situation of the rich is singularly *critical*, as our blessed Lord very solemnly announces.† Wealth does not give new passions, but it opens many dangerous opportunities for the indulgence of those we possess: it affords the means of self-gratification, to a degree which very few persons have the resolution to withstand. Hence, many have discovered, in prosperity, vices of which they were not suspected in poverty. So the heat of summer brings forward those weeds, which the cold of winter would have repressed.

* John vii. 48.

† Matt. xiii. 22.—Mark x. 23.

Therefore it is of infinite moment, that all who are born to an inheritance, or who come to ample possessions by trade, should, as the apostle admirably expresses it, KNOW HOW TO ABOUND.* It was an observation worthy of Solomon, † that “wisdom is good with an inheritance;” but without the former, the latter will be found, either an incumbrance, a disgrace, or a snare. There is great need of an enlarged understanding, to them that are distinguished by eminence of worldly station: just as a picture or statue, which is to be placed at a great height, ought to be made upon a much larger scale, than if it were intended to stand only on the ground.

You are convinced then, that it is always of vast importance, to furnish the understanding, and secure the principles, of young people of large connections and fortune. But let me faithfully add, this is peculiarly necessary now. We live in

* Philip iv. 12.

† Eccles. vii. 11.

an age of pleasure and dissipation. Never did temptations more abound. Never was youth more in danger of making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. The love of novelty, aided by the spirit of fashion, induces multitudes to travel abroad; and what do they generally bring back with them from their travels?—extremegayety and infidelity. How desirable, therefore, must it appear to every sincere friend of truth and virtue, that our young men of affluence should be deeply seasoned with the knowledge and love of the Christian Religion, before they ever quit their native country?—To these arguments may be subjoined some, which are more peculiar to our situation, as Protestant Dissenters. In the last century, it was usual for ministers to reside in the families of the great and opulent, for the very purpose of conducting the education of their youth: but this salutary custom is now almost entirely laid aside. Therefore, collegiate institutions for the laity are, at this time, more necessary than formerly.—In the next place, your public funds, for supporting divine worship in various

various parts of the country, stand in need of continual assistance and augmentation; and no man can reasonably expect, that the wealthy among the rising generation will contribute largely to this momentous design, if their own minds are not opened to liberality of sentiment, and tinged with the seriousness of piety. This circumstance alone might prove the expediency of such an Institution as the present; though it has been strangely overlooked by some persons, who have taken up a groundless prejudice against it.

Having thus established my first proposition, I proceed to the second, in which it was asserted, that *this Academical Institution holds out to such young persons extraordinary HELPS and ADVANTAGES for the purpose of QUALIFYING them to promote the cause of knowledge, virtue, and piety, in the world.*

This is the only part of my discourse, in which I have an advantage over my predecessors, who have recommended this
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Institution to public notice. Having been compelled, by the great increase of Students, and the nature of my personal concerns, to request a resignation of my office as Tutor, which the Committee have done me the kindness to accept, I appear before you, at this time, as much a neuter person, as any one within these walls. In consequence, I can praise with less reserve, because I can do it, without involving myself in the encomium.

Youth are admitted to this Institution, at an age, most desirable on the one hand, and most critical on the other. The period from fifteen to twenty is a season of great danger; and for learning the most valuable things, it includes the best five years of any man's life: after it, the faculties seldom improve—and before it, the mind cannot be brought to that sober steadiness, or to that conviction of the worth of time, which lie at the basis of all literary and moral improvement.

In this house, they are trained to habits of exemplary diligence. The earliest hours
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of the day are secured. Attendance on lectures cannot be evaded, by any commutation or fine. And the Session closes with a critical and impartial examination, whereby the application or negligence of every Student is discovered.

Whatever be the advantages resulting from private tuition, it is a fact not to be controverted, that the spirit of emulation, which of all springs of action is the most powerful in young minds, can never be called forth in its highest perfection, but in seminaries of a public nature. Quintilian was decidedly of this opinion; and the experience of every age has confirmed the sentiment of that great judge.*

I congratulate the public on the extraordinary helps which young men may receive in this College, from the number, character, and abilities of the tutors here engaged. Such a number cannot be convened among the Dissenters, in any other part of the kingdom. Their office is not

* Quintil. Institut. l. i. c. 2. *passim*.

a name, or a sinecure. Their industry is unremitted; their learning of the first degree, as well as the most important kind: their connexions in life must be of great service to young people; and their example cannot fail to give weight to every instruction.

Great is the variety and extent of studies here prosecuted. While much of school-education is employed about *words*, the education of a college has an immediate connection with *things*. Here the judgment is exercised and improved. History, civil and ecclesiastical, and philosophy, both natural and moral, present their deep stores to the mind. The origin of society, the foundation of government, the branches and obligations of virtue, are distinctly examined. Habits of reading usually beget a taste for it; and by forming such a taste, essential benefit is conferred on the future man, and upon the public: for though a love of reading is not itself a virtue, it is a powerful auxiliary to all the virtues.—And let it be particularly observed, that in such a

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house,

house, the evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion are very copiously studied, which, as we have already hinted, is a matter of infinite concern. Hereby, young men are guarded against the sophistry of unbelievers; they hear of all the objections which have been made, are familiar with the answers, and become Christians on such a solid foundation, that it is probable nothing will ever shake them. The mind is most hurt when suddenly surprised: this is true, with respect both to natural deformities, and spiritual difficulties. Therefore, it is the part of wisdom to obviate the effect of such difficulties, by previously announcing, and satisfactorily refuting them. I must take the liberty to say, that those parents do their children a grievous injury, who remove them from the college, before they can attend the course of lectures on this subject.* These lectures are worth all the studies in the world. Not that I mean that other studies should be neglected. On the contrary, others, well

* They generally fall within the limits of the third year.

pursued,

purfued, will affift thefe ; for there is a connexion in all the branches of knowledge : the more a man knows, the better can he examine Revelation ; and the more it is examined, the more it fhines.

In a former part of this difcourfe, there has been occafion to lament, that too many families, in the prefent day, live without family devotion. From hence it may be feared, that many youths may come hither, who have never been habituated, in a parent's houfe, to fuch ufe-ful exercifes. Behold, therefore, another advantage accruing from the regulations of this Inftitution ! Let us hope, that ftruck with the decorum of fuch a duty, and inured to its practice, during their continuance in the Seminary, they will, through the remainder of life, become its fteady advocates, both by recommendation and example.

Among the benefits to be expected from this Academical Inftitution, that of ftrict and uniform difcipline is much too important to be omitted. Indeed, its importance

portance to young people themselves, and to all with whom in future they may be connected—its absolute necessity for both worlds, is so great, that no words can be found to do it justice. However, I shall not descend to particulars on this subject, but refer the consideration of it to those who may speak after me, for this obvious reason—the discipline of such a house cannot be adjusted *at once*: it requires a series of experiments, and a succession of years, to bring it to that perfection, which its friends in general, and the superintending Committee in particular, have constantly in their eye. In the mean time, let this hint be applied by those, who are sedulously watching for any mistakes we may commit. Let them remember, that the springs and movements of a large machine are not regulated in a moment. I trust, there will always be such care, circumspection and authority, in the government of this College, that it will be a constant asylum, where virtue is not only uncontaminated, but cherished, strengthened, and improved.

I shall

I shall touch only on another advantage to be derived from this Institution, in which candidates for the Ministry, and persons intended for civil life, are educated together ; the friendships which they here form, will be of mutual service and comfort in future years ; and in all probability will be attended with great benefit to religious societies. Once, I acknowledge, I was of a different opinion, and thought, with many others, that Divinity and Lay Students should not be trained in one house : but I am now convinced of the error, and thus publicly retract it. Youths of fortune, having been educated with ministers, will not be so disposed to slight them, or to speak evil of, and unkindly to them, as if they had had no connection with them in early life. Having been witnesses of the labour and expence of their education, they will form advantageous conceptions of the office in general, and a steady attachment to such preachers in particular. They will be ready to help them. They will be inclined to augment the public funds for this purpose, or to assist by private donations ;

nations ; and, in either way, become the means of supporting religious worship, in distant, and perhaps ignorant parts of the island. They will co-operate with them in all useful schemes ; thus rendering ministers much more serviceable, and let me add, their own character and condition more respectable. Such connections, commenced in the period of youth, will be of great and permanent benefit to themselves. Many an hour, which would otherwise be sacrificed at the shrine of pleasure, will thus be secured to wisdom and virtue ; for they will be happy in conversing with men, whose education, profession, and habits, raise them above frivolous pursuits. Loving knowledge, they will associate with those, who can revive and enlarge their stock.

These are some of the advantages, which naturally flow from an Academical Institution like the present ; advantages, not merely for embellishing the minds of youth, but for qualifying them to promote the interests of knowledge and goodness as long as they live, and to transmit

transmit these invaluable blessings to posterity. Children's children, yea, the remotest generation, may be rendered wiser, better, and happier, by the Seminary you have now established. God grant it may be so! May unborn ages rise up, to accept and justify the invitation it presents — "Unto you, oh men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. Receive instruction, and not silver; and knowledge, rather than choice gold. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors."

May I indulge the hope, that some who hear me this day, and who have not yet contributed to so noble an Institution, will now be induced to give it their countenance, and generous encouragement! Whether you have, or have not been blessed with a liberal education, surely you cannot want a motive to assist this patriotic, this Christian undertaking. If a good education has been your privilege, let gratitude to God and to your parents, constrain you to extend the blessing

sing to others. If you have been denied this happiness, let a painful conviction of your loss persuade you to exempt others from a similar calamity.*

Some may possibly think that the two universities, so long and so firmly established, supersede the necessity of this new Academical Institution for Lay Students. But however venerable they may be by

* The following passage from an excellent writer, deserves the serious consideration, both of PARENTS and CHILDREN, "Wealth is useful, but obnoxious to fortune; the instability of fame detracts from its value; for a man to be well descended, is honorable, not so much to himself, as to his ancestors; health is desirable, but very precarious; beauty excites admiration, but soon decays; human strength is inconsiderable at best, and subject to be impaired by age and sickness: any of these may leave us before, and none of them can attend us beyond the approaching period of this earthly being. Therefore WISDOM and VIRTUE, the noble fruits of a good EDUCATION, are the only secure and immortal possessions. These can neither be affected by accidents, nor taken away by force, nor blasted by malice, nor withered by time, nor impaired by age. We may carry them with us, through all the changes to which mortality is exposed; and after they have made us happy in this life, they will pass along with us through the valley of death, and constitute our glory and happiness for ever."

Holland's Sermons, vol. i. p. 160.

time,

time, rich by endowments, or learned by culture, it has been largely and justly shewn on a former occasion,* that they are not adapted to our principles as Dissenters, because either the *entrance*, or the *progress*, is clogged with articles of subscription : and without any reflection on those who preside in them, we may assert, both from theory and experience, that the danger to *morals* is imminent. Very numerous bodies are not easily governed. “ Divide and rule ” may be a noxious principle in politics, but it is a valuable one in education. Should this new Seminary ever become too large for the exercise of perfect discipline, I hope others will be raised in convenient parts of the country.

But I must draw to a close.

To the FOUNDERS of this Institution I would humbly, yet earnestly say—persevere. When you set out on this work, you had to conflict with the discouragements which usually attend a new project. But these discouragements have

* See Dr. Rees's excellent Discourse, p. 42—57.

gradually vanished. Go on with alacrity. Like Cæsar, think nothing done, while any thing remains to be done. Endeavour to leave every thing in the best possible state for futurity. When your heads are in the dust, there will be none to exceed your care and zeal ; and possibly——but I turn from a supposition that gives me pain.

May the INSTRUCTORS in this Seminary long be preserved, in a capacity for public and distinguished usefulness. You have my most fervent prayers, that your doctrine may drop as the rain, and distil as the dew ; and that you may experience the truth of that promise, “ he that watereth, shall be watered himself.” I shall ever esteem it one of the greatest honours of my life, to have been inrolled with you, though but for a short season.

And now, my YOUNG FRIENDS, some of whom I have often addressed, in the character of my Pupils, and all of whom lie near to my heart——suffer the word of exhortation. Those of you who are intended for the ministry, will permit me
to

to caution you against an undue love of popularity. A degree of popularity is desirable, both as it animates exertion, and may contribute to usefulness: but if, instead of a subordinate motive, you make it the principal, you will probably be disappointed in your views, you must often stoop to mean compliances, which would destroy independency of character, and above all, you will forfeit the approbation and assistance of the great Searcher of hearts. When the supreme Judge shall come, and reckon with his servants, it will not be enquired, "what crowds we have attracted?" but "what good we have done, or at least attempted to do?" Let me caution you, during your theological studies, not to be too positive that you have discovered Truth. With riper years, and more extensive reading and reflection, you may possibly see occasion to alter some of your opinions. Do not come abroad into the world, thinking to subdue at once all its prejudices. This is a sort of Quixotism, to which some young ministers are greatly inclined: but alas, it is to suppose ourselves and our fellow-crea-

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tures,

tures, more than men. Finally, let me exhort you frequently to read the practical writers of the last age. Some of their sentiments may not accord with yours or mine; but there is a fervor of piety breathing through all their works, which no modern improvements in knowledge or elegance can supercede, and which will be of infinite service to us in all our prayers and discourses.

To those of you who are intended for civil employments or professions, I would solemnly address the consideration, that on YOU will principally depend the reputation of this rising Institution. In *your* breast, on account both of your numbers and fortune, lies the determination, whether order or confusion, prosperity or ruin, shall attend it. Many eyes are upon you. Public expectation has been wound high. Let it not be disappointed through your means. Submit to discipline. Be examples of regularity. The sacrifice is not difficult; the confinement will not be long; great will be your recompence.—When a few years are
fled,

fled, it is probable that many of you will sustain the parental character ; you may have sons, for whose education and improvement you will turn an anxious eye to this College. But oh ! what grief, what shame would you experience, if, by present folly and irregularity, you should have done a lasting injury to this Institution ! if, with your own hands, you should have *poisoned the fountain* at which your children should drink !

Now, my Brethren, I commend you all unto God, and to the word of his grace, who is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Amen !

F I N I S.

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R E P O R T, &c.

JANUARY 21, 1789.

AT a numerous and respectable Meeting of the Governors and Subscribers of the NEW COLLEGE among Protestant Dissenters, for the education of their Ministers and Youth, THOMAS ROGERS, Esq; was called to the Chair; and the following Report from the Committee was read; *viz.*

GENTLEMEN,

IT is with peculiar pleasure that your Committee now announce to you the prosperous state of the Institution, which you have intrusted to their care. The new wing was completed in the course of the last Summer, and furnished for the reception of students at the commencement of the session in September. The number of Students is now thirty-four; so that all the apartments in this wing, and several of the lodging-rooms in the center-building are occupied. Twenty-seven of these students are upon their own foundation; and seven upon the foundation of the Institution. Twenty-one are designed for civil life, and the remaining thirteen are intended for the ministry.

Your Committee are happy in this opportunity of bearing public testimony to the improvement and irreproachable conduct of all the young gentlemen; and they

they feel a peculiar satisfaction in the assurance, that several of them are distinguished by their abilities, application and acquirements, and are likely to reflect honour on the Institution with which they are connected. They congratulate you on the success which has already attended this laudable design, and they consider it as a presage of its continued and increasing prosperity. The accession of twenty students in one session is very considerable, and affords an encouraging prospect of the extensive utility of this Institution for the diffusion of knowledge, liberty and virtue.

In this recompence of the liberality and zeal of its founders and friends, your Committee rejoice with you. They are animated by it in every exertion for promoting the improvement of the students, and preserving the discipline of the college, as the necessary means of perpetuating the favourable opinion which the public seem to entertain of it. These important objects engage the assiduous attention of the superintending Committee and Tutors; and they have hitherto found no reason for dissatisfaction and complaint.

You, Gentlemen, your Committee are persuaded, will unite with them in wishing, that every young person, possessed of the requisite qualifications, and applying for admission, may be suitably accommodated in this College; and that the benefits of it may be rendered as extensive as possible. With this view your Committee beg leave to submit to your approbation the design which they have formed of proceeding with convenient speed to the completion of the plan, long ago suggested by many friends of the Institution—by erecting an additional wing on the west side of the center-building, corresponding to that on the east. They feel the necessity of additional accommodations; and they would be sorry

to reject any young gentlemen, who may apply, for want of room.

When they recollect the liberality which they have already experienced, they have no doubt of obtaining further assistance, and by adopting a plan similar to that pursued in the last year, as well as by a prudent management of their finances, of accomplishing this great design without changing the security of the permanent fund of the institution. An unknown benefactor has encouraged your Committee by a very liberal donation of 500*l.* They have also resources in a reversionary sum of 2000*l.* bequeathed by a very valuable friend, the late John Brown, Esq;—in the savings, which time may enable them to obtain from their annual income, and in the generous dispositions of those who are anxious for the prosperity of the Institution.

Their expenditures have been very considerable. The Institution is already in debt to the amount of 3200*l.* to those friends, who, in pursuance of the resolution of the last general meeting, have advanced loans for the purpose of preventing any interruption to the increase of the permanent fund; but they confide in the importance of the cause in the support of which they are engaged, and in the continued zeal and liberality of its friends.

The treasurers report, that 124*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* being the third part of 374*l.* the amount of the unappropriated benefactions received in the last year, hath been passed or placed to the account of the permanent fund, in pursuance of the 3d resolution of the 21st July 1786; and that the balance in their hands, on the 31st of December last, appears to be 104*l.* 17*s.* 3*d.*

Your Committee further beg leave to inform you, that the house of the resident tutor is finished; and that Dr. Rees now resides in it.

When

When your Committee consider the progress that has been already made in the accomplishment of an undertaking, that originated in the zeal of a few persons—When they recollect the accession of countenance and support which they have derived from the liberality of the friends of science, liberty and virtue—and when they anticipate the extensive and lasting benefit, which is the probable issue of the present undertaking, they feel no diffidence in the prospect of what now remains to be done.

With assistance, in any degree corresponding to what they have already received, their whole plan will be easily completed; and future generations will applaud the activity and zeal, which have been the means of transmitting to them invaluable blessings.

The Report having been read, the following Resolutions were unanimously agreed to, *viz.*

RESOLVED, That the report of the proceedings of the Committee, now read, is approved; and that the thanks of this meeting be given to the Committee, for the attention, diligence and zeal, with which they have exerted themselves in favour of the Institution.

RESOLVED, That the Committee be instructed to carry into execution the several measures pointed out in their Report, for building another wing, as well as for raising money, according to the plan of last year, and to take any other steps which they shall judge most likely to promote the credit and success of the Institution.

Six vacancies in the Committee having been declared, one of which is by death, *viz.* Richard Cooke, Esq. and five by lot, *viz.* R. Bright, Esq; Dr. Bayly, W. Russell, Esq; Edward Jeffries, Esq; and Dr. Rees.— Resolved, That the following gentlemen be appointed to supply the said vacancies, *viz.* J. H. Stone, Esq. R. Bright, Esq. Dr. Bayly, W. Russell, Esq. Edward Jeffries, Esq; and Dr. Rees, the five last being re-elected.

RESOLVED, That the thanks of this meeting be given to Thomas Rogers, Matthew Towgood, and Michael Dodson, Esqrs. for their past attention and trouble as treasurers to the New Institution; and that they be requested to continue their services for the year ensuing.

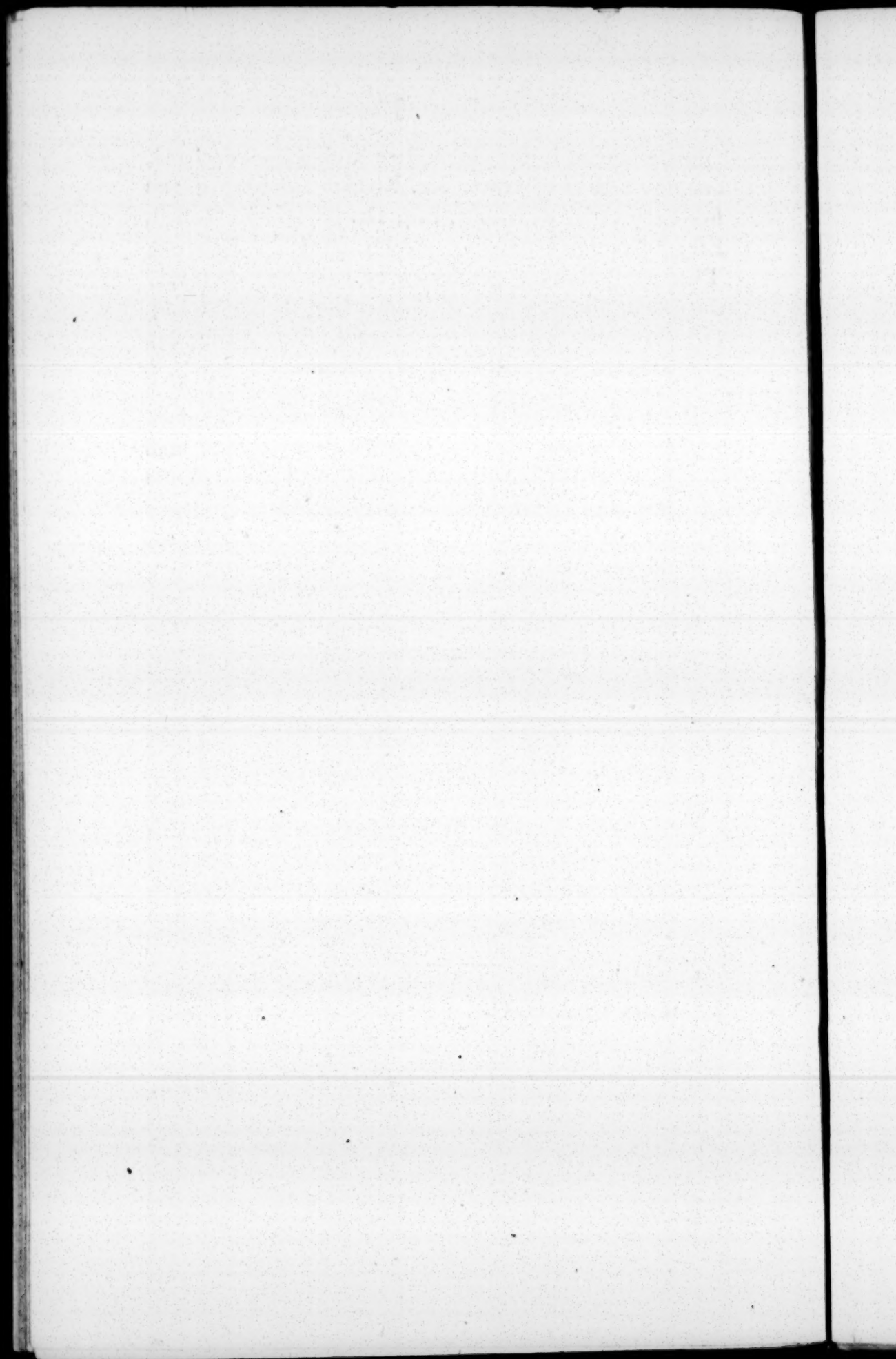
RESOLVED, That Mr. Samuel Rogers be one of the trustees of the permanent fund, in the room of Mr. Thomas Rogers, deceased.

RESOLVED, That the treasurers be requested to make up their accounts at Michaelmas instead of Christmas.

RESOLVED, That the thanks of this meeting be given to the auditors, Mr. Isaac Thompson, Mr. William Stone, and Mr. Daniel Turner, and that they be requested to be auditors for the year ensuing.

RESOLVED, That the thanks of this meeting be given to the Chairman.

THOMAS ROGERS.



At a MEETING of the GENERAL COMMITTEE, July 23d, 1789.

RESOLVED, That the following Advertisement be annexed to the Resolutions of the last General Meeting.

THE Committee, whilst they have the pleasure of announcing the prosperous State of the Institution under their care, beg leave, earnestly to recommend it to the further patronage and encouragement of those, who are convinced of its importance and utility. The expence of its complete establishment and continued support requires every liberal exertion. The sums that have been already raised by loans, and that will be further necessary for finishing the building, and furnishing its various apartments for the accommodation of Students, are very considerable. They incumber the Institution with an annual charge, that diminishes those resources which they should otherwise derive from the interest of the permanent fund, and the amount of the annual subscriptions, and which they would be glad to appropriate to other purposes. The Committee are therefore constrained to renew their application to the friends of the Institution, for such donations, or annual subscriptions, as may enable them the more speedily to accomplish the great object which they have in view.



(3)

HACKNEY, June 24th, 1789.

NEW COLLEGE.

THE Committee for conducting the NEW COLLEGE among PROTESTANT DISSENTERS inform the Public, that the next Session commences on the 3d Monday in September, and will close on the 1st day of July. The success of this Institution, during the short period that has elapsed since its first establishment, has been very encouraging. The new wing, added to the original building, and opened in September, was wholly occupied during the last Session; and another wing, corresponding to it, and containing a considerable number of very commodious apartments, is almost finished, and will soon be ready for use. Of the eligible situation of the College, and of the local conveniences and advantages that recommend it, nothing need now be said. The Committee and Tutors think it sufficient to assure the Public, that they will assiduously avail themselves of every circumstance that may be conducive to the health, moral conduct, and literary improvement of the young Gentlemen, who shall be intrusted to their care. They also add, that it is a fundamental principle of this Institution, that it be open to persons of every religious denomination, who will be encouraged in forming their sentiments on all controversial subjects without subscription or any other restriction or imposition.

The course of Education will be comprehensive and liberal, and adapted to youth in general, whether they are intended for civil or commercial life, or for any of the learned professions.

The lectures commence immediately at the opening of the Session, and are regularly pursued every day in the week, except Sunday, under the direction of the following gentlemen : viz. Rev. Andrew Kippis, D. D. F. R. S. and S. A ; Rev. Abraham Rees, D. D. F. R. S. Rev. Thomas Bellsham ; Rev. George Cadogan Morgan ; Rev. John Kiddle, Rev. Thomas Broadhurst ; Rev. David Jones.

The usual course for young Gentlemen, not intended for the ministry, will be completed in three years ; and will include the Latin and Greek (and if desired, the Hebrew) Languages, Greek and Roman Antiquities, Ancient and Modern Geography, Universal Grammar, Rhetoric and Criticism, Chronology, History, the Principles of Law and Government, the several branches of Mathematics, Astronomy, Natural and Experimental Philosophy, the Elements of Chemistry, Logic, Ethics, and the Evidences of Religion, natural and revealed. Young Gentlemen, who shall prolong their stay in College beyond the Term of three years, will have an opportunity of prosecuting those branches of Science to which they most incline, and which may be best adapted to their future prospects. The Committee and Tutors cannot forbear expressing their wishes and hopes, that this will be the case with respect to many, who are committed to their care.

The course for young gentlemen, intended for the Ministry, will extend (at least) to five years ; and will comprehend, besides the objects above enumerated, Hebrew, Ecclesiastical History, Theology, Jewish Antiquities, and the Study of the Scriptures.

The Commons are provided by the Committee : and the Students are under the more immediate direction and government of Dr. REES, who resides in a house near the
College,

College, and of Mr. BELSHAM and Mr. KIDDLE, who live in the College with the Students.

The Terms for each Session are sixty guineas, which will include separate Apartments, Board and Education. Each Student is also expected to contribute three guineas to the Library at the Time of his admission. Students on the foundation will be provided for in these respects without expence : and the Committee will encourage young persons intended for the Ministry, whose friends are willing to defray the charges of their board and Education, by a considerable abatement in the above terms.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the situation of this Institution affords opportunity of obtaining the best means of instruction in French and the other Modern Languages, Drawing, &c. at a separate expence.

No Divinity-Students will be admitted under the age of sixteen years, nor any Lay-Student above the age of eighteen years, nor under the age of fifteen years, except under circumstances, which in the opinion of the Committee, shall warrant a departure from this rule, so far as it limits the highest age of admission to eighteen : and it is expected, that all Students be well recommended both as to conduct and qualifications.

The Committee beg leave to inform the friends of those young Gentlemen who may be designed for this Institution, that, as the choice of rooms will depend on priority of application, those who give either of the Treasurers or of the Tutors the most early positive declaration of their intention to be at the College on the third Monday in September, will be entered in the Books according to the order of their application : but this priority must necessarily be confined to those who are present at the time above specified. They cannot help wishing, for very obvious reasons, that young Gentlemen may be
ready

ready for admission at the Commencement of each Session, and to have timely notice of the intention of their friends; but they are at the same time well apprized that some peculiar circumstances may render it desirable to procure admission after the commencement of a Session. When such circumstances occur, they will be always disposed to accommodate those who apply; and the Tutors will take care to fill up their time with advantage.

Application for the admission of Students may be made to

THOMAS ROGERS, Esq; Cornhill,	} <i>Treasurers:</i> Who will receive Subscriptions for this Institution.
MAT. TOWGOOD, Esq; Clement's-lane,	
MICH. DODSON, Esq; Boswell-court,	
Or to either of the Tutors.	

* * It is requested that all Legacies intended for the use of the Institution, be bequeathed according to the following form. " I give and bequeath to A. B. and C. D. the Sum of upon trust, and to the intent that they, or one of them, pay the same to the Treasurers for the time being, or one of them, of the ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION among PROTESTANT DISSENTERS, founded in the year 1786, now established in the Parish of Hackney, in the County of Middlesex, and desire and direct that the said sum of shall be paid out of my Personal Estate, and applied towards carrying on the laudable designs of the said Institution."

N. B. Books, Philosophical Instruments, or any other Specific Legacies, may be bequeathed in any words which the Testators may think fit to use.



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